

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: OCON ESCAP
SUBJECT: THIRTY FOURTH PLENARY SESSION OF ESCAP, BANGKOK, 7-17
MARCH 1978

REF: BANGKOK 7508

1. SUMMARY: ESCAP 34TH SESSION ADJOURNED 17 MARCH IN AN ATMOS-
PHERE OF GENERAL HARMONY WITH THE TONE OF DISCUSSIONS PROVING
LARGELY CONSTRUCTIVE. ANNUAL CHINESE-SOVIET CONFRONTATION OF
WORDS, IN WHAT APPEARED MIGHT CONCLUDE AS A STALEMATE, TERMINATED
AS A MINOR SKIRMISH. PRINCIPAL DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMISSION
(1) REQUESTED SECRETARIAT TO TAKE FULL ACCOUNT THAT THE ESCAP
REGIONAL CONTRIBUTION FOR THE 1980'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY SHOULD BE BASED ON NECESSITY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH
SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH, INTER ALIA, A CONTINUING EFFORT TO ELIMI-
NATE PROVERTY WITH THE PROVISION OF BASIC NEEDS TO IMPROVE THE
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QUALITY OF LIFE, TO ACHIEVE A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF
INCOME, AND TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION BY THE POPULATION,
ESPECIALLY BY THE RURAL POOR, IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT;
(2) TASKED THE SECRETARIAT TO COORDINATE WITH THE CENTRE FOR
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AND UNEP TO EFFECT REDEPLOYMENT OF STAFF AND
RESOURCES FROM THE GLOBAL LEVEL TO ESCAP AS A MEANS TO BRING
ABOUT GREATER REGIONALIZATION OF PROGRAMS IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN

SETTLEMENTS; (3) REQUESTED THE SECRETARIAT TO UNDERTAKE EARLY CONSULTATIONS WITH UNFPA TO CONVEY THE COMMISSION'S CONCERN REGARDING THE URGENCY OF POPULATION PROBLEMS IN THE REGION WITH A VIEW TO OBTAINING INCREASED RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMISSION'S POPULATION ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY FOR THE NEXT BIENNIUM BUDGET; (4) CALLED UPON THE SECRETARIAT TO CONSULT WITH THE SECGEN OF UN TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY OF PROVIDING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT TO THE REGIONAL TRAINING AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE COMMISSION; (5) URGED SECRETARIAT TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP A PROGRAM OF RELEVANT ACTIVITIES FOR THE PACIFIC AREA. END SUMMARY.

2. COUNTRY STATEMENTS THROUGHOUT PLENARY DEBATE CONTINUED TO REFLECT DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE SLOW PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE. THE COMMON FUND NEGOTIATIONS AND PROTECTIONISM WERE REFERRED TO MOST OFTEN BUT OTHER ISSUES RECEIVED ATTENTION. THE STATEMENTS WERE GENERALLY RESTRAINED AND SOME WERE CONCILIATORY. THE US STATEMENT WAS ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED AND CONVEYED SUCH AN EXCELLENT IMPRESSION AMONG OTHER DELEGATIONS IT PROVED DIFFICULT TO SUPPLY SUFFICIENT COPIES OF THE ENGLISH TEXT TO MEET DEMAND. ALTHOUGH THE LOCAL PRESS FAILED TO HIGHLIGHT US STATEMENT, RESPONSE FROM ALMOST ALL ESCAP DELEGATIONS WOULD INDICATE A DEFINITE IMPACT UPON THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE.

3 . THE ESCAP COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS HELD LENGTHY AND DIFFICULT NEGOTIATIONS, PRIMARILY WITH THE RESOLUTION ON ECONOMIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR THE 1980'S. THESE RESULTED IN AN EXTREMELY CONSTRUCTIVE DRAFT RESOLUTION AS NOTED ABOVE. EVEN THOUGH SOME AWKWARD NIO LANGUAGE WAS INCLUDED, IT CONTAINED NOTEWORTHY LANGUAGE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH SOCIAL JUSTICE AS WELL AS REFERENCE TO BASIC NEEDS WHICH TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS NEVER YET BEEN ACHIEVED IN RESOLUTION FORM WITHIN UN SYSTEM. THE US DEL COULD NOT CO-SPONSOR THE RESOLUTION BUT WAS ABLE TO SUPPORT ITS ADOPTION WITH APPROPRIATE CAVEATS.

4. THE FIRST ESCAP EXTRA-BUDGETARY PLEDGING CONFERENCE NETTED US\$5.5 MILLION IN CONVERTIBLE AND NON-CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY. THE US DEL WOULD ASSESS THESE CONTRIBUTIONS AS APPROXIMATELY THE AMOUNT MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WERE PREPARED TO CONTRIBUTE IN ANY EVENT AND THAT FEW IF ANY ADDITIONAL FUNDS WERE RAISED THROUGH THIS DEVICE.

5. THE REPORT OF THE INTERIM MEKONG COMMITTEE WAS NOTED ALONG WITH AN APPEAL FOR PLEDGES IN THE AMOUNT OF US\$50 MILLION IN SUPPORT OF PROJECTS. MOST OF THE PREVIOUS DONORS VOICED THEIR SUPPORT AND ALL EXPRESSED HOPE THAT DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA WOULD EVENTUALLY PARTICIPATE.

6. PROCEEDINGS IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MOVED SMOOTHLY WITH

RESPECT TO THE REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND CONSIDERATION OF ISSUES
IN VARIOUS FIELDS OF ESCAP ACTIVITIES. TROUBLE IN THE TECHNICAL
AND DRAFTING COMMITTEE AROSE WHEN THE PAPER ON INTERNATIONAL
TRADE WAS CONSIDERED. THE SOVIETS PROPOSED AN AMENDMENT WHICH
MADE REFERENCE TO QUOTE DELEGATIONS OF SOME SOCIALIST COUNTRIES
EXPRESSED A SATISFACTION UPON THEIR TRADE DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE
MAJORITY OF THE REGIONAL MEMBER COUNTRIES UNQUOTE. CHINA
DEMANDED DELETION OF THE WORD QUOTE SOCIALIST UNQUOTE AND
EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT THE USSR WAS A SOCIALIST COUNTRY. THE
ENSUING ARGUMENT CONSUMED SEVERAL HOURS OF VALUABLE TIME,
PUNCTUATED BY LONG SILENCES AND COFFEE BREAKS , AND RESULTING IN
A CHINESE AMENDMENT FOLLOWED BY A FURTHER SOVIET AMENDMENT.
NEITHER PARTY WOULD GIVE WAY LEAVING BOTH THEIR AMENDMENTS IN THE
FINAL DRAFT REPORT FOR PLENARY CONSIDERATION. DURING CONSIDER-
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ATION OF THE ANNUAL REPORT IN THE FINAL PLENARY SESSION, THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE TECHNICAL AND DRAFTING COMMITTEE READ A STATE-
MENT OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND THE SOVIETS WITHDRAWING
BOTH THEIR OFFENDING PARAGRAPHS. THIS WAS GREETED WITH CONSIDERABLE
RELIEF SINCE THE ENTIRE FRACAS WAS IRRELEVANT TO THE BUSINESS
OF THE COMMISSION. THE SOVIETS BEHAVED REASONABLY WELL DURING
THE CONFERENCE AND WERE NOT SO HEAVY HANDED AS LAST YEAR. BY

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CONTRAST, THE CHINESE WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO TAKE A WHACK AT THE SOVIETS QUOTE ONE SUPER-POWER UNQUOTE IN THE PLENARY, COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AND IN THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE. THE CHINESE, IN BITTER TERMS, CALLED THE BLUFF ON SOVIET POINTS EMPHASIZING THE PUBLIC SECTOR; RECOGNITION OF SOVIET BLOC QUOTE SOCIALIST UNQUOTE TRADE RELATIONS WITH THE ESIAP REGITNAL MEMBER COUNTRIES AND IN THE STVIET ATTEMPT, THROUGH A MONGOLIAN AMENDMENT, TO LINK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WITH QUOTE PROGRESS IN STRENGTHENING WORLD PEACE AND SECURITY AND IN THE FIELD TF DISARMAMENT UNQUOTE. THIS LATTER POINT WAS THE ESSENCE OF LAST YEAR'S CONFLICT WITH THE SOVIETS WHICH THE CHINESE DEFEATED. THE SOVIETS, ONCE AGAIN, LOST ALL POINTS LEAVING THE CHINESE WINNERS OF THE DEBATE.

7. THE INCREASE ROLE OF THE PACIFIC AREA IN THE ESCAP PROGRAM RECEIVED WIDE SUPPORT AND WAS ENHANCED BY REPRESENTATION FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SAIAI AND NAURU WHO WERE ABSENT AT THE LAST SESSION. THIS LED TO THE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION URGING CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN ESCAP AND THE PACIFIC REGIONAL ENTITIES, SPC AND SPEC AND THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT ESCAP LIAISON POSITION IN THE PACIFIC TO COORDINATE ESCAP ACTIVITIES. THE US WAS ABLE TO CO-SPONSOR THE RESOLUTION ON THE STRENGTH OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MARAMIS' BELIEF THAT THE POSITION COULD BE FUNDED FROM EXISTING RESOURCES UNTIL THE NEXT BIENNIUM BUEGET IS APPROVED.

8. ELEVEN RESOLUTIONS WERE ADOPTED BY THE PLENARY. A TWELFTH RESOLUTION ON LAND-LOCKED COUNTRIES PRESENTED BY AFGHANISTAN WAS SO POORLY PREPARED, THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE DISCARDED IT. WHITEHOUSE

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